NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE

bulletin

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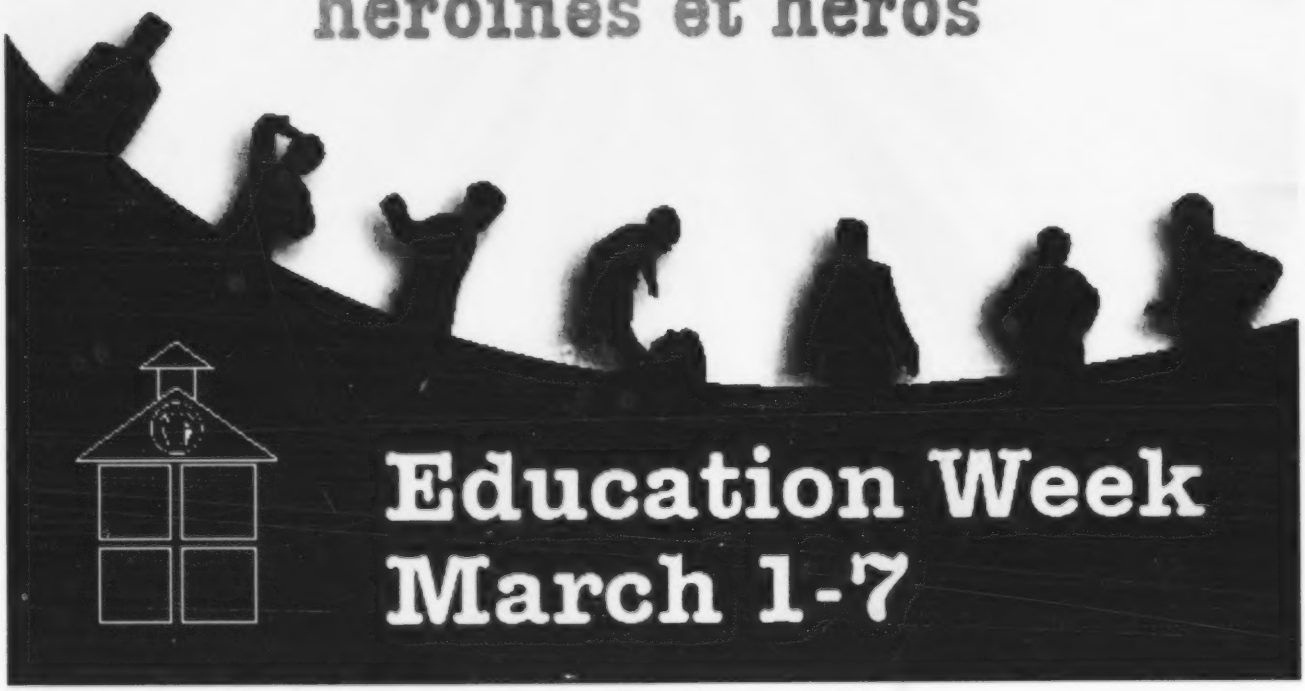
January/February 2009

Celebrate Our Heroes

Célébrons nos héroïnes et héros



Education Week
March 1-7

Up Front from the President

On behalf of your Provincial Executive, allow me to extend to you my very best wishes for 2009. May the coming year be one of good health, cheer and prosperity for you all.

A number of initiatives in the area of special education have been ongoing since the release of the Commission Report on ISSP/Pathways and the subsequent recommendations that have been adopted by government through the Department of Education. The NLTA Provincial Executive has met with Mr. Dan Goodyear, Director of Student Support Services at the Department and will continue to monitor the progress of these initiatives along with having NLTA representation on those committees that are pertinent to improving the system for students and teachers.

An "On-line Resource Committee" was formed last spring and continues to meet developing resources for teachers involved in Pathways 4 courses. These resources will be posted on-line as soon as they are fully developed. In addition, a website has been constructed so that students with print disabilities will be able to have on-line access to audio versions of textbooks. Alternate format materials are available on the Department of Education website for students diagnosed with a specific learning or physical disability.

Further to meetings held in May and June 2008, discussion groups have been held in each school district to get input from teachers (classroom, guidance, special education and administrators) regarding a new allocation model/approach for special education teachers. You may recall that this was one of the major components of both the Pathways and Teacher Allocation Reports that required further study. The discussion groups should complete their work by the end of February, if not before, and will hopefully be recommending further enhancements to special education allocations, especially for our classrooms where "remedial" students – Pathways 2 and those not diagnosed with an identified exceptionality, continue to be in great need of special education support.

The Educational Psychologists' Working Group has been meeting over the past number of months and the Guidance Counsellors' Working Committee has been scheduled to meet, as per the accepted recommendations 65 and 67 of the Commission Report. Part of the mandate of these groups is to review the demanding roles and responsibilities expected of both these specialists, with a view to recommending changes that would decrease their workload, making it more specific and thus more effective. The Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors and Psychologists' Association, under the capable leadership of their Council President, Trent Langdon, has been fully involved in this process already presenting a preliminary list of concerns and recommendations to the Director of Student Support Services at the Department.

Government is also currently involved in the process of establishing a working committee to address those accepted recommendations that refer to department heads for special education, specifically recommendations 8 and 10 of the Pathways Report. The NLTA will be invited to sit on this committee to ensure that our voice is heard concerning these recommendations as well.

School administrators should also have a good sense of the number of units which should be deployed by the districts to their schools as per the new teacher allocation model, keeping in mind that new class maximums will be introduced for grades 5 and 8 this coming September, at 25 and 27 students respectively.

As I mentioned in my December message, the school administration and staff, in consultation with district personnel, may conclude that there still exists a very legitimate staffing need at their school after the baseline allocation has been determined, based on the teacher allocation model. If such occurs, then a needs-based profile can be developed by the school and sent to district office along with an explanation of the need(s) to be addressed with data to support that request. As per the new allocation model, this school profile of needs would become part of the "District Report" that would, in turn, be delivered to the Department of Education ahead of any final cabinet decisions relative to government's budget for education for 2009-10. I would strongly encourage any school that is anticipating additional needs for 2009-10, beyond what the class size maximums and specialist ratios should provide, to consider preparing this needs-based profile for submission to their district, if not already done so.

Once again, all the very best to you and your families for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2009.

Sean

the bulletin

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Members Only Section of the NLTA Website

The Members Only Section of the NLTA website was launched to all teachers during the week of January 26th, 2009.

A **user name and password** was emailed to all teachers on **January 26th**.

If you have not received a user name and password please go to **www.nlta.nl.ca** and complete the NLTA Member Profile form and return it to the NLTA office. We cannot email you if you do not provide an email address.

The address for the NLTA website is still **www.nlta.nl.ca**. Much of the information previously available to any person visiting the site is now only accessible on the Members Only Section. In this way we can provide **private and confidential** information to the membership through the NLTA website.

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

RUSHOON

Students engage in unique learning opportunity

On Thursday, December 4, students in Mr. George Sheppard's Canadian Law class at Christ The King School in Rushoon took their study of Criminal Law to a different level. Earlier in October, they happened upon the 1998 murder trail of 11-year-old Nathaniel Abraham. The class researched the case, pouring over many articles and documentary footage. In an effort to enhance his students' participation and learning even more, Mr. Sheppard made contact with the prosecutor of the case, Ms. Lisa Halushka, now a Law Professor in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

Shortly after the initial contact, plans were made to have the former prosecutor of the Abraham case speak with the class via teleconferencing. Mr. Sheppard and his students engaged Ms. Halushka for about an hour on December 4. During that time, the former prosecutor revealed many aspects of the case that captivated their attention. Students posed many questions and were met with responses that were insightful and enlightening. The students and their teacher commented that the event was a tremendous and unique learning opportunity. School Principal, Leo Hynes, noted that it was the kind of educational opportunity that speaks to the nature of diverse teaching strategies and diverse learning.

Christ the King School students participate in a teleconference with Lisa Halushka.

EASTPORT

Outdoor activities increase student appreciation for nature

The Physical Education program at Holy Cross School in Eastport has added several annual visits to Terra Nova National Park to its repertoire. "With a revived focus to life-long physical activity in the province's Physical Education curriculum, outdoor activities provide students the chance to enjoy nature," said Andrew Poole, Physical Education teacher at Holy Cross School. "Now thanks to the Park, we have been able to combine the knowledge and expertise of their many great employees with educational experiences students will not soon forget."

Students at Holy Cross School enjoy a fall canoeing trip at Terra Nova National Park.

This year, students ranging from grades 7 to 12 will travel to the Park to take part in hiking, canoeing and snowshoeing activities. The students particularly enjoy learning about the Parks' ongoing research of the Newfoundland Martin. Starting in grade 7, students learn how humane traps are set to catch and study the animals and the important measures Parks Canada is taking to protect this threatened species. Once the students reach high school they take part in hands-on work, actually accompanying Park biologists into the field. "So far this season we are zero for one," said Mr. Poole, "but last winter we were lucky enough to see a pregnant female Martin, one of only approximately 35 animals in the Park!"

Park biologist John Gosse, who plans and leads the Martin trips, says "Parks Canada is making stronger links with the local community and increasing awareness about the importance of protected areas." Holy Cross School is fortunate enough to be just a short drive from the Park; therefore, they try their best to use all of its opportunities to increase student appreciation for nature – all the while keeping them healthy and active.

In December the school's junior high students were lucky enough to be filmed for a promotional Internet video to attract people to Terra Nova and they are currently working with the Park in helping to organize an Adventure Race this winter. This will be the first of its kind for the school and the Park!

GOULDS

Students "Raise the Roof"

Students at St. Kevin's High School in Goulds brought some extra Christmas joy this year to deserving families in their community by contributing over $1,000 to the school's "Adopt a Family for Christmas" campaign.

The Level 3 students of Homeroom 126 went above and beyond as they raised over a quarter of the school's total. Their overwhelming generosity forced the temporary removal of a ceiling tile in their classroom as they "raised the roof" with donations. Students Tracy Roche, Michael O'Reilly and Sara Kavanagh were the driving force behind the tremendous support shown by the students of Room 126. Tracy says, "there's no such thing as loose change lying around the house anymore... sorry Mom". According to Sara, "when it's for a good cause like this one, it's easy to give, and then the giving just becomes contagious".

Congratulations to the students of Room 126 and all the students of St. Kevin's High!

Pictured from left to right: St. Kevin's High students Tracy Roche, Michael O'Reilly, and Sara Kavanagh.

WITLESS BAY

School celebrates grand opening of its Saturn Playground

On December 9, 2008 St. Bernard's Elementary School in Witless Bay celebrated the grand opening of its new playground equipment. During the 2007-08 school year, St. Bernard's partnered with Hickman Saturn to raise funds for the installation of the structure. The school raised $20,000, which was matched by Saturn, plus a $5,000 grant. "The students, staff and parents of St. Bernard's would like to thank Hickman Saturn for being outstanding corporate citizens in helping us achieve our healthy living goals," said George Samms, Physical Education Teacher at St. Bernard's Elementary.

Students and staff of St. Bernard's thank Saturn and the other businesses for their contributions.

In 2005-06, St. Bernard's Primary School absorbed the elementary students from the former St. Patrick's School in Bay Bulls. The school was expanded and a new gymnasium was added to the school. In 2006-07, the school formed a school grounds improvement committee whose goal was to transform the school grounds into a space that was healthy, safe, environmentally friendly and, of course, fun for the students. The committee of teachers and parents developed a five-year plan.

In phase 1 of the plan, the Eastern School District installed a fenced-in playing field on the lower part of the school property to meet some of their physical education and recreational needs. In phase 2 and 3, Newfoundland Power was invited to the school to put off their annual "Envirofest" program in June of 2006. Twenty-two Newfoundland companies showcased their eco-friendly products and services followed by the majority of St. Bernard's students and their parents planting $3,000 worth of flowers, plants, bushes and trees around the school's property. Pat's Plants

supplied the vegetation and the cost was covered by Newfoundland Power. At the same time, Harbour Construction did the excavation, installing a 200-foot wheelchair accessible ramp to the lower field and designed an outdoor environmental classroom.

In the fall of 2007, St. Bernard's received assistance from their local MHA, Keith Hutchings, to complete phase 4 of the plan. Together they paved the area next to the gymnasium turning it into a playing area that could be utilized by the students for hopscotch, square ball and outdoor basketball.

Three years into their five year plan, the students, staff and parents of St. Bernard's Elementary School, with the assistance of corporate partners and local businesses, have transformed the grounds from having the parking lot as the only area where the children could play to a beautiful, healthy play space overlooking the ocean that is used by the students and community all year round.

St. Bernard's School would like to thank the many businesses that contributed to their project. They include Hickman Saturn, Newfoundland Power, Harbour Construction, The Navigators, The Ronnie Power Band, Gatherall's Boat Tours, Kennedy's Family Drugs, Pat's Plants, Witless Bay Kinsmen, Southern Shore Car Show, Murphy's Subway, Rattling Books, Fog Devils, Holy Heart of Mary Alumni Choir, Artist Allan Gillard and Keith Hutchings (MHA). "Our school grounds are a perfect example of what can be achieved through the joint efforts of the school, community and business," said Mr. Samms.

POUCH COVE/OUTER COVE

Presentation teaches students it's okay to be different

Primary students (K-3) at Cape St. Francis Elementary in Pouch Cove and St. Francis of Assisi in Outer Cove received a presentation from Mr. Glenn Barry, Guidance Counselor, on the topic of disability awareness during International Inclusive Education Week, December 1-5, 2008. Mr. Barry is a trained volunteer with Easter Seals, the organization that has developed a new program of Disability Awareness called "I Can Too…!". The program focuses on the many positive attributes of people living with physical disabilities.

The Easter Seals Disability Awareness "I Can Too…!" program addresses issues within a very flexible interactive structure that includes storybooks, videos and a collection of multicultural teaching dolls with various types of adapted equipment such as a wheelchair, walker, hearing aids, leg braces, forearm crutches, and a white cane. One visually impaired doll even has a guide dog. The material is available to any school or youth group interested in addressing disability awareness and inclusion.

The major strength of the Easter Seal's "I Can Too…!" program is that it utilizes a very child-centered psychosocial educational approach to teaching very young children about the nature of various disabilities while educating children about how we are all the same in so many ways and yet 'just a little' different in other ways. Individual differences are discussed and children are able to quickly learn that all children are more alike than different in that they all have feelings, want to have friends and have fun. Children learn that every individual has strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes that help form the makeup of their own unique personality. Students also receive the take away message that these special attributes which all individuals possess are often overlooked or masked when a person has a physical disability.

Students from Cape St. Francis Elementary and St. Francis of Assisi enjoy a presentation on disability awareness by Guidance Counsellor Glenn Barry.

The message is also given that it is okay to be different and that differences make us who we are. Inclusion for all is emphasized as is the important concept of the benefits of differentiated instruction to meet the educational, social and psychological needs of all students. The Easter Seals Disability Awareness "I Can Too…!" program celebrates the uniqueness and developmental diversity of every child while promoting a culture of inclusiviness for all children.

Along with focusing on the positive attributes of people living with physical disabilities, additional learning outcomes and resources used in this program consist of: suggestions to help guide children when greeting people with disabilities; Health Canada's *Words With Dignity*, which helps children to understand the use of appropriate terminology to describe persons with disabilities; use of the Easter Seals Etiquette Guidelines specific to general, hearing, visual and communication disabilities; and

coloring sheets and word searches to reinforce the concepts taught – namely that children living with disabilities can lead active and fulfilling lives. Having a disability does not mean an inability!

For additional information, please visit the Easter Seals web site www.easterseals.nf.ca. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the Disability Awareness "I Can Too. !" program, or to access Easter Seals programs and services please telephone 709-726-2622, toll free 1-888-601-6767 or e-mail info@easterseals.nf.ca.

Both Cape St. Francis Elementary and St. Francis of Assisi have Guidance Department web sites with links to many different types of exceptionalities and helpful information for parents, students and teachers. Please visit one of these sites to obtain additional information: St. Francis of Assisi (www.assisi.k12.nf.ca/Guidance_Department.asp); Cape St. Francis Elementary (http://mail.esdnl.ca/~glenn_barry/S0014B7FD?Was%20Read=1).

ARNOLD'S COVE

Campaign promotes social justice

Students and teachers at Tricentia Academy in Arnold's Cove had a different twist to giving this Christmas season. Students recognized their teachers by giving their Christmas wishes in the form of monetary donations. The monies collected were then donated to the local Salvation Army Food Bank. This worthwhile giving activity promotes the Eastern School District "Social Justice Action Plan". The principle of social justice encompasses the legal and moral obligations to promote opportunity, equality, civility and respect for all people. Tricentia Academy is very proud to promote the goals of this plan through their "Change For Charity" campaign.

Mrs. Rosalind Blackwood, representating Tricentia Staff, presenting a cheque to Major Fudge of the Salvation Army in Arnold's Cove.

EXPLOITS VALLEY

Exploits Valley Branch scholarship winner announced

Catherine Burt of Northern Arm has been awarded the 2007-08 Exploits Valley NLTA Branch Scholarship. This annual $500 scholarship is awarded to the Level III student with the highest overall academic average in the branch. The recipient must be a son or daughter of an Exploits Valley NLTA member. The award money is collected (voluntarily) from teachers in the branch. Catherine is the daughter of Gwen Burt, a teacher at Point Leamington Academy.

l-r: Ford Butler, Chairperson, Scholarship Selection Committee; Scholarship winner Catherine Burt; and Rick Duffy, President, Exploits Valley Branch.

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA Staff Changes

Judy McCann-Beranger

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Judy McCann-Beranger to the replacement position of Coordinator, Employee Assistance Program for the period of January 5, 2009 to September 30, 2009. Judy is replacing Marie Wall who is currently on leave.

Judy has a wide range of experience in mediation and counselling, and most recently worked with the Alzheimer's Foundation in PEI. She returned to the province in 2007 after living and working in PEI since 1990.

Judy has received numerous outstanding service and recognition awards including the Long Term Achievement and the FAMMA Leadership Award from Family Mediation Canada; the National Leadership Award from Family Service Canada; the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal; the Distinguished Service Citation from Rotary Club of Charlottetown and the International Year of the Family Award from the Government of Canada; to name a few.

She has held many volunteer leadership positions and worked or volunteered with numerous organizations in her areas of expertise. Judy has also written publications in the area of guides to caregivers, elder mediation, respite programs, family strengthening ideas as well as many others. She has presented at numerous national and provincial conferences and developed and facilitated training seminars/educational programs in many areas of health and wellness.

Judy has an Honour Masters of Arts degree in Community Development from Regis University in Colorado and Bachelor of Arts Degrees in Psychology and Education. She is a certified Comprehensive Mediator and a Canada-Certified Family Educator.

Whose Line is It Anyway?

Whose line is it anyway? That's the hook for the Romeo and Juliet Renaissance Fair that took place at Brother Rice Junior High School on December 16, 2008. "Students welcome the opportunity to challenge their peers in a battle of the wits in the ways of Shakespeare," said Phorsha Noseworthy, English Department Head at Brother Rice.

For nine years, Brother Rice Junior High School has been hosting this Renaissance Fair as part of the activities for the study of Romeo and Juliet. What started as a simple competition of quotes within the classroom has grown to include all grade 9 students and crosses many curricular areas. As well, community involvement has been a part of this fair that captivates students every year.

The competition, which takes place in Celtic Hall of the school, has two final classes pitted against each other for the much-coveted hand carved wooden swords presented to the school by an alumni student.

Students become involved in videography, photography, sound production, music production, acting, costume selection, and so on. Under the guidance of Mr. Chuck Herriott, a local actor-artist who was sponsored under the Visiting Artists program to share his expertise, the grade 9 students have the opportunity to take part in either mask-making or improvisation. Ms. Marie Sharpe, the costume designer from the Arts and Culture Centre also lends her experience and expertise.

The morning also offers entertainment. Alumni students, both members of a fencing team, return to perform a sword fight. As well, several teach-

ers and students attired in dress representative of the Elizabethan era, ham it up in the morning by engaging in a fight of their own. "All this adds up

Brother Rice students dress in period costumes during their Renaissance Fair.

to a morning filled with delight, entertainment and intrigue," said Ms. Noseworthy.

The response to the fair has been an extremely positive one. The staff of Brother Rice is contemplating hosting it in the gym next year as all students and teachers are anxious to see it and possibly be a part of it. As well, parents applaud those teachers involved in creating such a strong interest in Shakespeare. One parent emailed: "Philippe is an avid reader but was not that eager to read and study Romeo and Juliet. After completing the unit on this play, he asked me last week if I could give him my copy of the play, so that he could add it to his own collection of favourite books. Seems you have certainly made him appreciate different genres of work, beyond the fantasy/magic/medieval which he still adores. Thanks for instilling in him an appreciation of some of the classics of the English language."

Ms. Noseworthy says it is the generation of such interest that provides fertile ground for learning and that is ultimately what it is all about for teachers. The week leading up to the competition has students studying Shakespeare in the cafeteria during lunch break and voluntarily taking the text home to study. Teachers have witnessed students quizzing each other and having actual conversations about the play. "The sense of competition, the hands on activities, the involvement of other teachers in entertaining, the opportunity to wear the costumes and vie for the swords has created an environment within which learning has become an exciting and enjoyable experience. Isn't that great?"

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Fishery Officer for a Day Contest

Level III student Mallary McGrath from Fatima Academy in St. Bride's will always remember her last couple days of school before graduation. Those are the days she spent soaring high above the ocean as an observer in a DFO surveillance plane and patrolling the ocean on a fast rescue craft.

Ms. McGrath was the winner of the 2008 Fishery Officer for a Day Contest. Her essay about lobster conservation was selected as showing the most personal initiative and best answering the question about declining lobster stocks.

Ms. McGrath spent a couple of full days experiencing first-hand the work of a DFO fishery officer. She particularly enjoyed checking out the cutting-edge technology aboard the Beechcraft King Air plane that fishery officers use to identify and monitor fishing activity at sea.

Pulling up a lobster trap and discussing its content with a lobster survey technician who was collecting data was an unexpected bonus for Ms. McGrath. Other highlights included lunch at Woody Island, an interview with John Furlong on the popular Fisheries Broadcast radio show, and taking pictures of her house and school while flying over her hometown.

Although Ms. McGrath initially had no interest in pursuing a career as a fishery officer, her experience has led her to think twice about it as an interesting and rewarding job that would allow her to stay home in Newfoundland and Labrador after finishing university.

Since 2005, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has sponsored an annual Fishery Officer for a Day Contest for high school students from grades 10 - 12 in Newfoundland and Labrador. The purpose of the contest is to get young people thinking about how they can help conserve our ocean and freshwater resources and engage them in thinking about how our personal actions directly impact aquatic species and their habitat.

Students are asked to prepare an essay, an art poster or a multimedia presentation (radio ad, slideshow, video ad, webpage) that addresses a specific question in relation to stewardship issues in our province.

This year there will be two grand prize winners (one on the island, one in Labrador) and three first-place winners (print, art, multimedia). Grand prize winners will spend a day in the field with a fishery officer experiencing first-hand the kind of work DFO does with conservation and protection. This could include a boat patrol, an aerial surveillance flight, an ATV patrol or a snowmobile patrol. All winners also

receive a prize package and certificate, along with a classroom visit from a fishery officer in their local community.

This year's contest begins in February 2009 and an information kit will be mailed to all schools at that time. All entries must be postdated no later than April 3, 2009.

Winners will be announced on May 4, 2009 and classroom visits to the winners will be arranged by a fishery officer in consultation with individual teachers. Grand prize winners must complete their travel by the end of May 2009.

Fishery officers are available to visit your classroom to explain the contest, to provide a presentation about a career with DFO as a fishery officer, and to talk about stewardship issues like their work with protecting aquatic species at risk.

Please contact DFO's Communications Branch at (709) 772-7623 for more information.

NLTA Scholarship awarded

Heather Dorie

Heather Dorie from Fort McMurray, Alberta has been named the 2008-09 recipient of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Scholarship.

Growing up, Heather never imagined that being from Fort McMurray would be her claim to fame. To add to that accomplishment, she holds a B.Mus. Degree from the University of Lethbridge (piano) and an M.A. in Religion from Canadian Theological Seminary. Heather held positions such as a deputy manager of a youth hostel, education assistant, private piano and voice instructor and university lecturer before deciding to pursue a B.Mus.Ed. She is excited that she has been given the opportunity to act as a choral scholar with Shallaway this year. In addition, she has just completed all of the degree requirements for her program and looks forward to making St. John's her new home.

The NLTA Scholarship is awarded annually on the basis of academic excellence and character to a senior student enrolled in the Faculty of Education. The scholarship, valued at $750, is awarded annually by the MUN Senate Committee on Scholarships, acting on the recommendation of the Dean of Education.

Ella Manuel Award notice

The President of the Ella Manuel Trust has announced that the Ella Manuel Award will not be awarded for 2009. It is the intention to return to their normal awards in 2010.

OTTAWA

Kiwanis Read-a-thon

The Kiwanis Read-a-thon is the latest in a series of child- and youth-centered initiatives sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa. Available free to your school, Read-a-thon is designed to encourage children to become better readers, by reading more often, trying out new books – and having fun doing it.

Schools do not compete with each other, so you can run your Read-a-thon when it best fits your school's schedule. Register for Read-a-thon to receive access to the free Teacher's Tool Kit, featuring teacher-tested and approved materials that will help you launch and implement a successful Read-a-thon at your school. Registration is ongoing and available to any school. Visit www.kiwanisreadathon.org to register.

INTERNATIONAL

Young Reporters for the Environment

Young Reporters for the Environment is an international program designed to encourage students to write articles and take photos of environmental problems and solutions in their communities. More than 12,000 students in 17 countries take part in Young Reporters for the Environment, providing an opportunity for students to connect with students around the world to further their learning of environmental and sustainable issues, explore journalism as a career path, and enhance their writing skills. The program is a great activity and tool that can be used to work closely with students.

Environmental Defence, a charitable organization, is coordinating Young Reporters for the Environment in Canada. Environmental Defence has been active for nearly 25 years and focus on research, education and finding solutions for some of the most critical environmental challenges we face today. To find out more information, visit www.environmentaldefence.ca.

RAYMOND ANDREW PALMER, 1958 - 2008

On October 4, 2008, the family and friends of Ray Palmer were blind-sided with his sudden and unexpected passing. It remains surreal!

Ray was born to Pastor Andrew and Hazel Palmer. He graduated from high school at R. W. Parsons Collegiate, Robert's Arm in 1976 and went on to complete a B.P.E. and a B.Ed. from MUN. He started his teaching career with his wife, Barbara, at St. Lunaire Academy, Griquet and finished his teaching experience in this province after 29 years, with six years at Exploits Valley Intermediate, Grand Falls-Windsor, to move to the principalship of an all-grade school at Hall Beach, Nunavut. The majority of his professional life however, was spent at R. W. Parsons Collegiate and its subsequent evolution to Green Bay South Academy. It was in Roberts Arm that Ray and Barbara raised two remarkable daughters, Lesley and Laura, who have both continued the teaching tradition of the family by earning Education degrees from MUN.

Warren G. Bennis states that, "Truly profound and original insights are to be found only in studying the exemplary." I believe Ray Palmer to be in that class of persons called exemplary. He was a person of great character who demonstrated integrity, courage, honesty, loyalty and compassion in his daily living. These qualities alone make him stand out from the crowd, but when combined with his intelligence, tremendous work ethic, great sense of humour, pride in a job well done, extreme efficacy, great organizational ability and leadership skills, it made him a giant – a larger than life person. Ray was not of large physical stature but he was an "impact person": humble and unassuming, shying away from the limelight and at times even uncomfortable with his success. Ray Palmer had the strength of character to make his family, friends and co-workers feel valued and he enabled us to better ourselves. This is true greatness.

Ray's lasting contribution in education will undoubtedly be shared by students and colleagues for years to come. He realized that the success of students was so much more than outcomes, grades and report cards. Ray gave of his time, energy and ability to ensure that the most disadvantaged and at-risk students stayed in school through his extra-curricular and varsity sports programs.

Ray's legacy will live on in those he loved – his wife and best friend Barbara; Lesley (Bradley Slade, Deer Lake, NL) and his pride and joy, grandson Isaac; Laura (Craig Mews, Cold Lake, AB); father (Andrew); brothers; sisters; in-laws and close friends. We will not let his memory fade!

(*Submitted by Jim Hibbs, friend of Ray Palmer*)

MELISSA MARIE SMITH, 1967 - 2008

On August 10, 2008, Heaven welcomed a wonderful teacher with an angelic voice. On that day we lost a beloved daughter, sister, sister-in-law and aunt.

Born in Corner Brook on May 24, 1967, Melissa was the youngest of two children born to Ambrose and Patricia Smith. She later moved to Pasadena where she graduated from Pasadena Academy in 1985. Melissa won numerous scholarships at the local, provincial and national level. She attended Memorial University and then Laval University where she graduated with a French degree in 1990. She completed a Bachelor of Education degree at Memorial University the following year.

Melissa did her student teaching at Presentation Junior High School with Denise Rumboldt, who coincidentally had also been Melissa's French teacher at Pasadena Academy. Her short teaching career began at St. Peter's Primary in Mount Pearl in 1992, where she taught grade 5 French Immersion. She later transferred to Mount Pearl Intermediate.

In 2000, Melissa became very ill and was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Unfortunately, this saw the end of Melissa's teaching career as the disease impaired her motor skills and caused her great difficulty with her speech.

Melissa's passion was teaching. She loved everything about it, especially the children. She was known for her organization, her loving ways, her dedication and her quick wit. She was adored by her students.

Melissa's other passion in life was music. She had a beautiful voice. From singing in local talent shows with her sister as a child, to recording a song in high school, to singing at numerous weddings as an adult, she brought many a tear to an eye with her incredible voice.

Her other great love was her nieces, Katelyn and Alex Osmond. They are left with many wonderful memories and numerous keepsakes. As well, their mother, Darlene, Melissa's only sister, has a lifetime of wonderful memories and stories to share with them so that their "Aunt Nissie" will never be forgotten.

Melissa's passing has left a hole in the lives of her parents, Ambrose and Patricia Smith, that will never be filled. She will be forever missed by them, as well as her sister Darlene, her brother in-law Stan, her nieces Katelyn and Alex, and a large circle of relatives and friends.

Melissa, you were, and forever will be "The Wind Beneath My Wings".

(*Submitted by her sister, Darlene Smith-Osmond*)

Ray Palmer

Melissa Smith

Substitute Teachers – Things to Know

by STEVE BROOKS

Substitute teachers are members of the NLTA and as such enjoy all the rights and privileges of membership. They are eligible to hold office within the Association, to be a delegate to the Biennial General Meeting and to seek advice and representation from the Association. Other topics substitutes should be aware of include:

Group Insurance

As a substitute teacher, you are eligible for coverage under the NLTA Group Insurance Plan's substitute teacher program. In order to join, you need to apply to the plan within 31 days of your first teaching day in a given school year. For substitute teachers who apply later than this, their applications will be subject to evidence of insurability. In order to maintain coverage in the following school year, you will need to have taught for at least ten days the previous year and at least one day before November 30 of the following school year. Payment of premiums must be made via bank deductions. New substitute teachers are encouraged to contact the Association after their first day of employment to discuss group insurance coverage.

Pension

All substitute teachers participate in the Government Money Purchase Pension Plan (GMPP). This plan is administered by Great West Life and the contribution rate is 5% of salary, matched by government. The GMPP is a defined contribution plan which is similar to an RRSP in that investments and earned interest determine the benefit level upon retirement. Substitute teachers who obtain replacement or permanent positions should consider transferring their GMPP service to the regular Teachers Pension Plan (TPP), which is a defined benefit plan. Teachers in this position should contact the Pensions Division by fax at 709-729-6790, providing their name and social insurance number, to request a transfer of their funds from the GMPP to the TPP.

Pay Scale

Substitute teachers are paid according to Schedule B of the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements. However, when a substitute teacher replaces the same regular teacher for four or more days, as per Clause 49.02 (Clause 46.02 in Labrador West), the substitute teacher will be paid according to Schedule C of the Collective Agreement, which is the regular teacher salary scale. If a paid holiday occurs during a substitute teacher's contract period, the teacher will receive pay for that holiday. For teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador, there are three paid holidays: Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day and Victoria Day. A paid holiday is considered to occur during a contract period if the substitute teacher is working on the teaching day immediately before and after the holiday.

EI Eligibility

For the purposes of Employment Insurance (EI), one full day of teaching is reported as eight hours of insurable employment. The number of hours required in the qualifying period to be eligible for regular EI benefits varies from 420 - 700 for those who have been in the workforce for the past two years. Under existing EI regulations, 910 hours are required for those who are considered to be "new entrants" or "re-entrants" to the workforce. It is important for all teachers to be aware that, under existing EI regulations, teachers are often not eligible for regular EI benefits during the non-teaching periods (Christmas and Easter breaks, July and August) except under certain exceptions. Teachers who do receive EI benefits during the non-teaching periods must be actively seeking work in fields of employment other than teaching during those periods. If you are in receipt of regular EI benefits during the summer based on hours of employment accumulated as a teacher, you may become ineligible once you accept a contract for a teaching position that commences in September.

Sick Leave

Substitute teachers who accumulate 50 days of substitute teaching during a school year and are unable to work during a contract period due to illness are entitled to access any paid sick leave they have accumulated. Once a teacher has 50 days of substituting service, he/she is also entitled to retroactive payment of sick leave back to their first teaching day of that school year for any days missed due to illness during a contract period. It is therefore very important for substitute teachers to maintain careful records of their teaching contracts and any days missed during a contract as a result of sickness. Teachers may only access sick leave they have accumulated through the formula outlined in Article 15 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 27 of the Labrador West contract). For the purpose of accessing paid sick leave, an illness related absence is considered to have occurred during a contract period if it happened after the teacher had commenced work during that contract period.

For more detailed information on these and other substitute teacher topics, please refer to the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements, Infosheet #13 – Substitute Teacher Membership and Benefits, the NLTA Group Insurance Program, the Teachers' Guide to Employment Insurance, and the Substitute Teacher Information page, all of which can be found in the Publications section of the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca).

Steve Brooks is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Are You Thinking About Retiring?

Information You Need to Know

by PERRY DOWNEY

Under the Teachers' Pension Act, a teacher is eligible for pension benefit:
(a) At age 60 with between five and 24 years of pensionable service.
(b) At age 55 or after with at least 25 years of pensionable service.
(c) After completing thirty years of worked service* regardless of age.
(d) Reduced pension with 29 years of worked service and at least thirty years of pensionable service. Pension will be reduced based on the number of months a teacher will be retired prior to reaching age 55.
(*worked service refers to all pensionable service, except university study buy-back that was purchased prior to 1991.)

Access to Pension Estimator

Teachers also have access to a pension estimator through the main page of the Virtual Teacher Centre (VTC) at www.virtualteachercentre.ca and on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca), click on "Publications" and go to "P". Teachers can now go on-line and using their individual Teacher Benefit Statement that they receive from the Pensions Division, input their salary information and obtain an estimate of their expected pension at a chosen point of retirement. As well, there is a web site dedicated to the Teachers' Pension Plan under the government site at www.fin.gov.nl.ca/fin/pensions/tpp1.asp.

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

The following checklist is designed to assist teachers as they participate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

❒ Apply to the NLTA to attend a pre-retirement seminar up to two years prior to your year of retirement;
❒ Confirm the eligible date of your retirement with the Pensions Division at the pre-retirement seminar or by contacting Pensions Division.
❒ Submit your resignation to School Board (do not resign until eligibility has been confirmed): one month notice is required if retirement is to occur prior to Christmas; three months notice (March 31st) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
❒ Apply for pension by completing the appropriate "Teachers' Pension" application.
❒ Complete and submit the Direct Deposit Form to Pensions Division.
❒ Apply for severance pay by completing the "Severance Payment Request" form.
❒ Confirm/consult with Johnson Incorporated on Group Insurance coverage: 1-800-563-1528.
❒ Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting it to the Pensions Division.
❒ Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
❒ Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Changes Effective Upon Retirement

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life Insurance coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid); coverage terminates at age 65 and is replaced by a members only $15,000 benefit after age 65.
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker" or is on a forced medical retirement).

Any questions or comments can be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

NLTA Teacher Health and Wellness Promotion Pilot Project Update

by MANUEL BALL

Over the past number of months, the NLTA has implemented a Teacher Health and Wellness Promotion Pilot Project aimed at encouraging teachers to be actively involved in improving or maintaining their own personal health and wellness. Although there have been a number of programs put in place over the years focusing on school health, the majority have been focused on student health, and teachers have not had a program focusing on their needs. The goal of this pilot project is to help teachers take steps in improving their own personal health and wellness, which will help them not only in their professional, but their personal lives as well.

All schools in the province were invited to apply last spring to participate in the pilot initiative. The NLTA Health and Wellness Committee selected 35 pilot schools from the 90 applications received. The schools selected provide a representation from all five school districts, as well as representation from the various grade levels and school configurations, and urban and rural representation.

In the initial phase of the pilot project, each of the schools involved completed a School Health Needs Assessment Survey. Through this survey, schools were able to identify possible areas relating to health that they would like to address through the pilot project. Some of the commonly identified areas for improvement included increasing physical activity, improving or maintaining healthy nutritional habits, and stress management.

The NLTA Teacher Health and Wellness Promotion Pilot Project moved into its "action phase" at the start of the 2008-09 school year. Throughout the fall, schools involved in the pilot project have been planning and implementing wellness initiatives based on the Needs Assessment Surveys that were completed. The schools participating in the pilot project were able to apply for funding to cover some of the costs associated with implementing the initiatives in the schools. Up to the Christmas break, approximately 25 grants had been approved for pilot school initiatives. These initiatives have included such things as purchasing equipment to create a teacher fitness room, hiring a qualified instructor to teach yoga and pilates classes on-site at schools, having a registered dietitian come to the school to do a session during a PD day, as well as numerous other activities and initiatives.

Throughout the remainder of the school year the schools involved in the pilot project will continue to develop and implement school-based wellness initiatives. As further activities and initiatives are put in place, ongoing evaluation of the pilot project will give further direction for those schools that are involved. Further updates will be provided in *The Bulletin* as this pilot project continues throughout the remainder of the school year.

Manuel Ball is Coordinator of the NLTA Teacher Health and Wellness Promotion Program.

Can We Afford Inaction?

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

In our busy daily teaching and living environments, with our hectic mix of professional duties and personal responsibilities, there are many things that demand our attention.

We *act* when this demand is for immediate attention. We know these things and we act as needed. The fire alarm, a classroom incident and a kitchen spill all cause us to act. We facilitate a safe exit from the classroom because lives may be at risk; we intervene to provide appropriate discipline in the classroom because control, acceptable behaviour and leadership are essential; and, we quickly clean up the spill to avoid a slip, bacterial growth or a sticky mess! We act because we are aware of the urgency to prevent further complications. Our lives, safety, health or well-being are in jeopardy.

We *plan* for the things that we accept as needing action, but not immediate action. Those actions we delay until the circumstances are more convenient. We pick up groceries on our way home from work or a meeting, or after payday, or when we have a comprehensive shopping list. We prepare lessons when the students have left, the resources are at hand or we have the time and space to think or work uninterruptedly.

Unfortunately, we *resist* other things within our environments that would benefit from change. Our action is impeded by personal factors that make "inaction" the temporarily preferred choice. For those, we avoid, ignore, neglect or procrastinate taking, or even contemplating taking, any real action. These commonly include: personal well-being issues; career questions; relationship challenges; and, financial management. In many areas of our lives we experience varying levels of discomfort, which may be persistent or transient. Either way, we learn to live with that discomfort if we are less comfortable with the idea of engaging in one of the obvious alternatives.

Challenges to Action

Teachers choose not to act on some of the demanding issues because of a sense of hopelessness. School discipline, changing curriculum, increased paperwork and documentation, disrespectful behaviours, physical and psychological abuse of teachers and negative relationships and conflict can fall into this category. Areas of personal lifestyle or well-being also represent issues where we become stuck. We either choose to spend our energy on things that we feel are more urgent or we decide to delay taking action because of the emotionally disruptive cost of action.

Why Not Take Action?

Teachers may initially attempt to correct unhealthy conditions but may find that they do not have the authority, influence or support to create the needed change. When faced with repeated failure, teachers may eventually give up trying and may even feel that it is useless to attempt to correct similar situations. Awareness of unsuccessful attempts due to ineffective strategies or insufficient information, direction or support may inhibit us from trying again. We may also avoid initiating action because we don't know where to start or how to go about creating a more positive environment. We may even believe that maintaining calm is the most important thing at the time. Not taking immediate action also means that we can temporarily avoid confrontation and some conflict. Another significant source of our inability to act is psychological. Sometimes this comes from our fears of: failure, rejection, resistance, the unknown, (or the known), conflict, or other emotionally challenging reactions. However, knowing why we resist taking action can help us change that behaviour.

What are the Costs of Inaction?

When components of our daily lives cause discomfort, we put ourselves at further health risk by permitting the discomfort to continue and grow. When we allow our workplace conditions to foster unhappiness, there is often accumulated frustration, increased dissatisfaction and decreased productivity. The problems are likely to escalate; complications will compound and the personal consequences flow over into our personal lives. Discontent, fear, illness, decreased morale and increased irritability, are early signs that the issues, and our inaction, are costing us too much. This drain on our physical, emotional and mental energy robs us of the fullness of life. If action

is not taken, the effects can progress to more serious health ramifications and prolonged work absence.

Why Do We Finally Take Action?

We decide to act for positive or negative reasons. We are motivated to act when we see the value and believe that with our intervention, change is possible and probable. We also choose to take action when the current situation or conditions become either unmanageable or unbearable. In either scenario, we overcome our propensity toward inaction.

Although it is in our best interests to take action because it would be "good for us"; we often don't act until we feel forced to minimize the influences which are "bad for us". We know that appropriate rest, relaxation, nutrition, activity and social contact help us feel healthy. However, we often ignore that knowledge and change behaviour only with strong negative motivation. Finally we act to avoid a heart attack, minimize medication or decrease the physiological, psychological and behavioural responses to excess stress.

Taking Action Toward Change

Whatever the motivation, when we finally decide to act, we need to have a plan! We must know what we want, who and what resources are available to assist and, what to do if changes cannot be implemented. What works for one person may be completely inadequate for another. Therefore the strategy for achieving success must be unique to our individual needs, resources and situations. Additional supports are available to assist with creating change. We need not handle workplace or personal challenges alone. To begin, we accept responsibility for personal decisions or actions that created or maintained the situations; and we accept responsibility for creating change. Without accepting responsibility, we claim no control over our situation and are directed to inaction.

This guideline can be used to initiate action:

- Select one issue requiring action. Choose one that will have a great impact and will free up energy and resources, thus encouraging you to then take on another. Examples can be to: quit smoking; find a satisfying job; improve relationships. These are big things that interfere with a general sense of wellness.
- Understand why this is an issue and why change has not yet happened. Reasons for inaction could include: nicotine withdrawal; previous failed attempts; time and energy to plan and act.
- Identify reasonable and available options. Here we need to call upon our own skills, past experiences and successes, and the existence of external supports. We may need new knowledge or skills, the support of other people or expertise and a definite plan.
- Clarify the consequences of Action and continued Inaction. This will help us make the most reasonable choices in planning an action strategy.
- Define factors that hold us in place. Then we can be prepared for the resistance when we start to act. This can prevent us from yielding to obstacles along our action path.
- Evaluate the motivation for change. Whether it is the gain or loss of money, health, relationships, resources or even our job, when the consequences of action or inaction become significant enough, we will be motivated to act.

Now we know what can be done, why we should do it and how to get it done. What will it cost to act?

You Choose

Identify your energy drain. Can you afford inaction?

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Judy McCann-Beranger (ext. 265).

Eric Jensen Conference
"Teaching With the Brain in Mind" … A "Big" Success

by GEORGE TUCKER

The Council of Special Services (COSS) partnered with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Modern Languages Council, the Primary/Elementary, Intermediate and Senior High Levels Councils to bring internationally renowned 'brain-based learning' guru and educator Eric Jensen to St. John's on November 6 and 7, 2008.

Some 700 educators packed into the Delta Conference Centre for two informative, action-packed, fun days of theory and practice related to "Teaching with the Brain in Mind". Jensen provided specific, practical connections and useful achievement-boosting strategies for educators at each level: primary, intermediate and high school. Since all teachers influence their students, he focused on brain-based theory and the applicable strategies that teachers can implement to assist their students to acquire complex learning and achieve their best. Participants learned the essential "learning rules" for how our brains work as these are, according to Jensen, the most critical seven factors that influence learning the most. Jensen also shared his knowledge on how children with special needs can be helped. He spoke passionately about the importance of incorporating the Fine Arts into the curriculum. The influences of music, drama and movement are vital if students are to engage in the learning process and be successful in our classrooms. All strategies shared by Jensen were tied to the most current brain-based research and he role-modeled when possible.

Participants endorsed their conference experience wholeheartedly. As one teacher was overheard saying, "This was an amazing learning experience." Numerous similar comments were espoused and attest to the relevancy of the conference and the skillful and energetic facilitation skills of Eric Jensen.

The five NLTA Special Interest Councils who co-sponsored the Jensen Conference initiative were delighted with the success of the endeavour. They are also grateful to the generous contribution provided by the Department of Education and the five School Districts who supported delegates by providing quite significant financial resources as well as substantive substitute time.

Due to the collaboration and cooperation of the education partners of Newfoundland and Labrador, some 700 educators were able to avail of the expertise of an international renowned expert at a reasonable cost. Hopefully, the success of the Jensen Conference will encourage even more collaboration and cooperation in future so that other major conferences can be organized for the benefit of educators. If so, we can anticipate that both educators and their students will benefit immeasurably.

During the Jensen Conference, an idea surfaced encouraging delegates to support the Janeway Children's Hospital. As a result of simply placing a basket at the front of the conference centre, participants contributed $558.80. This generous donation was made to Janine Kerrivan, Executive Director of the Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation, on behalf of the Jensen Conference delegates. Ms. Kerrigan was quite grateful for the Jensen Conference delegates' thoughtful initiative and support. Well done colleagues!

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

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40 ans d'immersion française...presque

par PAULA COUGHLAN

Du 20 au 22 novembre j'ai assisté au Congrès annuelle de l'ACPI. Cette année le congrès L'immersion en français...un héritage capital a eu lieu à l'hôtel Crowne Plaza en pleine milieu de la ville d'Ottawa. Nous étions plusieurs professeurs oeuvrant dans le domaine de l'immersion français du conseil scolaire Eastern de Terre-Neuve et Labrador qui y représentaient notre province. Il y avait également des représentants des autres districts scolaires ailleurs à Terre-Neuve. Parmi le groupe du conseil scolaire Eastern, il y avait presque vingt professeurs des écoles primaires, intermédiaires et secondaires de St. John's, de Mount Pearl et de Conception Bay South et les environs. Gillian Blackmore et Jacqueline Rideout représentaient le conseil scolaire Eastern. Deux professeurs de l'École Mary Queen of Peace School, Martine Brouard et Elizabeth McNeil, ont animé une session intitulée *Montons les échelons, un enseignant, une classe, plusieurs niveaux de compétences*. Cette session était destiné aux enseignants du niveau primaire et était très appréciée. Les enseignants en immersion française d'autres provinces canadiennes ainsi que des professeurs de français d'ailleurs au monde sont venues également en grand nombre. Il y avait environ 600 congressistes en total. Presque six cent professeurs de français. Cela fait une petite armée n'est-ce pas? Le congrès était une expérience qui une fois encore m'a convaincu de l'importance de poursuivre l'apprentissage du français dans un pays bilingue comme le Canada.

Arrivant a l'hôtel Crowne Plaza vers midi, j'ai eu le temps de rencontrer quelques personnes, d'y mettre quelque chose sous la dent lors du beau buffet qu'y était offert et d'assister a une session l'après-midi sur l'importance et les pratiques en évaluation. Ce fut un sujet très à jour étant donné qu'avant de partir de l'école le mercredi soir j'avais passé d'innombrables heures à préparer les bulletins de mes élèves pour le premier trimestre. Le vendredi matin, lors du déjeuner le Commissaire aux Langues Officielles du Canada, M. Graham Fraser, conférencier invité, s'est adressé au groupe. Il a prononcé un discours intéressant au sujet de l'enseignement de la langue française dans les programmes d'immersion au Canada. À travers son discours il témoignait souvent de tous les avantages d'une éducation bilingue et il racontait des histoires de tous les jours ou le bilinguisme faisait preuve d'être en bonne santé. Dans les différents postes publiques qu'il a occupés au cours de sa carrière, cet homme a pu voir et témoigner de tous les avantages d'une éducation bilingue. Aussi, le recteur de l'Université d'Ottawa, M. Allan Rock, avait des mots encourageants à dire de la part de cette université. Le président sortant de l'ACPI, M. Thierry Karsenti, a pris la parole ensuite. Il nous a souhaité officiellement la bienvenue au congrès en saluant notre promotion de la langue française à travers notre travail. Il a souligné que les programmes d'immersion existent au Canada depuis environ quarante ans.... notant que parmi le groupe d'enseignants qui s'y rassemblait au Congrès ACPI 2008 il y en avait peut-être qui y ont enseigné en immersion française pendant 40 ans ou presque. Pour moi c'est depuis 25 ans que je suis là. J'ai commencé à enseigner dans le programme d'immersion française à Terre Neuve en 1982. Le premier poste que j'ai occupé était à l'École Primaire Notre Dame du Cap à Cap St. Georges sur la péninsule de Port au Port sur la côte ouest de Terre-Neuve. J'ai commencé à enseigner la classe de 2e année en immersion précoce. Au cours de mes années d'enseignement j'ai eu des classes du niveau primaire et élémentaire. Beaucoup d'élèves a qui j'ai enseigné ont termine l'école il y a longtemps. Récemment j'ai eu le plaisir de voir quelques-uns de mes anciens revenir travailler à l'École Holy Trinity Elementary. Il y en a une ou deux qui sont devenues enseignantes en immersion elles-mêmes et une autre qui retourne poursuivre ses études à Memorial University. Elle voudrait enseigner en immersion au secondaire.

Parfois, lors des moments de réflexion sur ma carrière et sur le chemin que j'ai poursuivi dans la vie, je me demande pourquoi j'ai décidé d'apprendre le français. La réponse n'est pas difficile à trouver car sans aucune hésitation je peux dire que c'est que l'occasion d'apprendre le français s'est présentée à moi. C'était à l'époque, dans les années 70 ou le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme avaient commencé à porter fruit. Je finissais mes études du secondaire à Holy Heart of Mary High School à St. John's. Notre enseignante, une religieuse Sr. Eileen Sesk, avait proposé à la classe de finissantes de faire demande pour une bourse d'étude pour étudier le français dans un programme d'été. Nous étions plusieurs de ma classe à gagner cette bourse d'étude et d'aller étudier le français pendant six semaines au CÉGEP de Trois-Rivières au Québec. Ce fut une expérience très enrichissante que j'ai adoré. J'ai toujours aimé écouter une autre langue et j'adore les sons et l'aspect musical du français oral. J'aimais surtout les cours de conversation où on nous a forcé de nous exprimer oralement. En septembre, lors de la rentrée, j'ai continué mes études en français à Memorial University et depuis je peux dire que tout au long de mes années d'études je me rends compte que cette piste vers l'apprentissage d'une autre langue a été une des expériences de ma vie des plus enrichissantes et valable.

J'étais un nouveau professeur en 1982. Lorsque j'ai commencé, j'ai toujours aimé être avec de jeunes enfants dans la salle de classe. Ainsi je peux dire aussi sans hésitation que j'ai toujours aimé mes années d'enseignement. Les enfants à qui j'ai enseigné le français au début de ma carrière sont maintenant adultes, et quelques uns touchent peut-être même la trentaine. Je me demande de temps en temps ce qu'ils sont devenus et s'ils ont continué à apprendre le français au cours de leurs vies.

La fin de semaine dernière, j'ai eu la chance d'assister a une célébration pour la 50e anniversaire de mon alma mater Holy Heart of Mary High School. Il y avaient toute un programme d'activités pour fêter l'anniversaire dont un Concert Gala magnifique qui mettait en vedette des anciens et anciennes de Holy Heart qui ont eu des carrières remarquables en musique telles les Ennis Sisters, Shelley Neville, Mary Barry et beaucoup d'autres. J'étais fière d'y faire partie et de chanter avec la Chorale Holy Heart of Mary Alumnae Choir. Sur place le vendredi soir, attendant notre groupe qui se mettaient sur scène, j'ai réfléchi à mes deux années très brèves à Holy Heart et je me suis demandé ce que cette école m'avait donné. Parmi les choristes, nous jasions ensemble de nos souvenirs. Nous discutions de l'influence que cette école avait eue sur nous. Qu'est-ce que cette école nous a donnée? Ce que Holy Heart m'a donné? Mais sans doute c'était l'occasion d'apprendre le français.

Le lendemain, lors d'une Open House pour les célébrations du 50e anniversaire, je filais les corridors espérant rencontrer une ancienne camarade de classe ou une amie oubliée depuis longtemps... Je dis bonjour à beaucoup de gens, quelques-uns sont des parents d'enfants à qui j'ai enseigné en immersion. Et hélas, je rencontre une ancienne de Holy Heart qui est beaucoup plus jeune, dans la vingtaine....je reconnais le visage. Voilà une jeune femme – Keelin – qui j'ai enseigné en 2e année en 1988, qui a gradué il y a probablement 6 ou 7 ans. J'étais enchantée de reconnaitre quelqu'un et d'avoir quelqu'un à qui parler. En jasant, elle dit, « Bonjour mademoiselle...oui, je me rappelle de toi...tu étais mon professeur de français en deuxième année. » Quand je lui demande ce qu'elle fait dans la vie elle me répond « Je suis enseignante de français et je travaille à Holy Trinty High School à Torbay. »

« Quelle coïncidence », je lui dis. « Moi, je suis enseignante à Holy Trinity Elementary School à Torbay. » Nous étions bien enchantées toutes les deux de cette réunion inattendue et fortunée. Je souhaite à Keelin, qu'un jour elle assiste à un congrès de l'ACPI et que comme moi, elle passe beaucoup d'années à aimer enseigner le français.

Paula Coughlan enseigne en immersion à Terre-Neuve depuis 25 ans. Elle est professeur en 4e année à l'École Holy Trinity Elementary a Torbay.

Get Connected; Start Sharing @ www.myvtc.ca

by JIM MURPHY

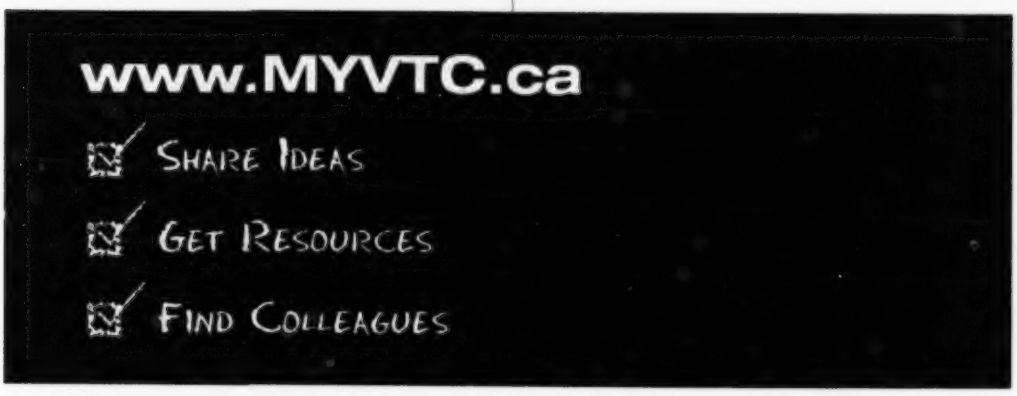
As a teacher, I am always interested in what my colleagues are doing in the classroom. Are they using the same strategies I use? Are they experiencing the same successes or failures? What is working for them and what is not? The unfortunate side is that due to the structure and scheduling of most schools, opportunities to observe peers in action are rare. Actually, the teaching profession is one of few where professionals have a tendency to work in relative isolation. It has often been referred to as the "lonely profession" where teachers close the door to the outside world and are left on their own to deliver curriculum.

Many schools in the province subscribe to the concept of professional learning communities and recognize that teachers need to have opportunities to work together, to learn from each other, to share ideas and to share resources. But, our province is unique. There are many small schools where collaborative opportunities are more limited. Small schools and even larger schools likely mean you are the only high school math teacher or grade 4 teacher in your school. Where do you go, then, to share your teaching strategies, find best practices, or search for a great teaching/learning activity that is specific to the outcomes you are addressing? Where can you go to share your subject-area expertise, your classroom experience or your assessment practices?

The Virtual Teacher Centre is offering educators tools through which teachers can find and share classroom experiences and resources. In the coming months, a new environment called "Community Server" will be introduced. As this new platform is rolled out, there will be opportunities to interact with peers using tools such as blogs, forums, wikis and media centres for knowledge exchange. Like many knowledge sharing networks on the web, the knowledge shared in the community comes directly from the users in the community. So, if you have a great teaching strategy you would like to share, then MyVTC is the place to share it. It will take some time to populate, but with time this will grow into a valuable resource centre for educators. Of course, you will still be able to access the other great features of the current Virtual Teacher Centre as we continue to build and update content and link it to the new site.

How do I become a member?

You may already be a member of the Virtual Teacher Centre, but we are asking that you create a new account so that we will better know who our active users are. You will still have access to all the great features of the current site once you have signed in and we establish a link to the current site content.



To become a member, simply go to: www.myvtc.ca and click "join" in the top right corner. Complete the short form and you are on your way.

What do I do once I create an account?
Once you have created an account, you have the option of creating a profile. You can access your profile by clicking the edit button that appears next to your name. The amount of detail you wish to provide is completely up to you.

So, where do I find stuff?
Once completed, all the elements of the current Virtual Teacher Centre will be at your fingertips. But the added bonus is you can now decide to become a member of a community. A community is a group of users with common interests. You can join any public communities you wish, or request to become a member of a private community, depending on your needs. For example, a public community might be one called "brain-based teaching" where participants share ideas on using brain-based research to enhance the classroom. A closed, or private community may be one where a group of participants want to develop or share assessments for elementary mathematics. Only recognized members of the group can access the content associated with the community.

Is my privacy protected?
Yes, your privacy is protected. Your email address is only used by site administrators for communication purposes. Only registered users have the ability to sign in to the site. Only registered users can join communities and interact with other users. In your profile, you can choose to have interaction with other users or no interaction with users; the choice is yours to make. Site administrators will be watching for any unacceptable activities and have the ability to remove users if necessary. As is the case with many online communities, it is the communities themselves that are proactive in reporting any questionable activities on the site.

Will I be able to access the documentation and resources from the current virtual teacher centre?
Yes, you will be able to continue to access these services. It will take some time for us to integrate them with the new tools, but they will be available.

If I want more information?
For more info, please contact us: jmurphy@nlta.nl.ca or bpittman@nlta.nl.ca and we would be glad to provide you with details on MyVTC.

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Research Study Results

Opening a Can of Worms

by Dr. Kimberly Maich

In the April 2005 issue of The Bulletin, a call for volunteers was placed, noting that, "participants are requested to take part in an interview on the promotion of social, emotional and behavioural growth in the school environment." Following this – and other – public provincial advertisements, a total of 20 teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador thankfully and willingly volunteered their time, ideas and experiences to a research project. Their perceptions and practices are now entitled "Opening a Can of Worms: Perceptions and Practices of Teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador Incorporating the Role of a Therapist" in a successfully defended dissertation supervised by Dr. Don Dworet at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario.

To my participants, my thanks for their time and energy is documented as such, "Many heartfelt thanks, as well, go out to all of my research participants. Without your experiences, this research would not have been possible."

The 20 participants who shared their experiences in this study took part in detailed interviews, responding to questions including student-teacher relationships, social, emotional and behavioural issues, and school-based instruction of such skills. These focused on the primary research questions: Are teachers using a therapeutic approach to instruction? Do teachers believe they are adopting a therapeutic role in the classroom? What do teachers believe about student-teacher relationships in the school context? How do teachers intervene in personal social, emotional and behavioural issues? How do teachers instruct social, emotional and behavioural skills? Participants also examined scenarios focused on typical, transitory, medical, special educational, and emotional/behavioural needs. Four participants took part in case studies contributions with greater length and intensity. Significant findings emerged as six themes.

Talking and Listening

To obtain a sense of the issues that potentially impact teachers in the school environment, participants shared their experiences with school-based personal problems, such as: "They used to stay after school and linger around, and then they'd tell me, they'd open up little by little, but it wouldn't happen in one day … I think [for] this one young girl it happened over a couple of weeks. She would stay after school and, 'You need any help?' And I'd say, 'Yes,' and as we were talking she'd tell … I wouldn't pry … I just let her open up." The typical profile of the support provided for reported personal issues of students was primarily within conversational skills: listening and talking. Such interactions were most often student initiated and often suicide related, and often supplemented support with formal referrals to school-based guidance counsellors.

Being a Teacher; Acting as a Teacher

In order to obtain perceptions of what issues fall within a formal instructional role, participants generated meanings of the teacher role, characterized by the following: "I believe it is more important than strictly academic learning, because … they need to know what's appropriate socially, and they have to be … co ntent or [in] a happy emotional state in order for learning to occur anyway … I see that as *more* important than the academic learning." In this study, a teacher is defined by actions and characteristics: a predominantly academic instructional role, responsibilities within social and emotional domains, as well as tasks that fall within the primary duties of the parent and therapist roles.

Building Bridges to Therapy

Building bridges to therapy provides a further explanation of how a therapeutic role is adopted. Teachers firmly believed they are adopting a therapeutic role in the classroom, described as: "Definition[s] of teacher and therapist are … getting to be one and the same. And the sad part is … we get all the policies and we

get all the things we're supposed to do, like mark in the register and do all these things. We don't get the training that allows us to know how to relate to the children and deal with these difficulties as they come up … we deal with children now who … [come] to school with a lot of baggage … might have a learning disability, might have family problems, those who are divorced, those who have been sexually abused, and the teachers are on the front lines, and we're the ones that have to deal with that. And in many cases, we have to be a therapist; we're kind of thrust into the role whether we like it or not."

Relationship Foundations

It was clear a strong belief in the essential nature of student-teacher relationships existed, expressed by one participant as: "It's all about faith. And you have to be also aware [of] why you want to do this; is it worth it? Worth my time, to save this soul? It's almost like [being] a soul saviour, and if the answer is yes, you have to invest energy." Participants commonly reported the belief that positive student-teacher relationships are related to positive student learning. They suggested that the deliberate forging of bonds with students most commonly helps to create that positive relationship on the part of teachers.

Keeping Doors Open

Notable moments of importance in ongoing student-teacher relationships were shared, as well as how they have developed over time, such as: "I took them all over to my window, and I said, 'That's my house over there' … and I said, 'Myself and another teacher – I called her by name – live there, and if you have any time that you are hungry, or you're cold, or whatever, or you just want somebody to talk to, there we are.' And I felt after that I showed them that I actually did care, and … they did come to my home, and I did feed them, and they watched movies, and they slept; they did it all. Once they knew that … this person really cares for us, they're not only here to teach us and get money … they're here because they really want to be here. And I felt that a lot of those kids used to open up to me about particular problems and certain things. And [I] actually help[ed] them in their lives and their homes." Relationships were extremely important most commonly as additional attention in the context of the school environment during an ongoing relationship. Evidence for the importance of positive relationships was most often found through continued student-teacher contact.

Social, Emotional & Behavioural Issues

Participants responded to questions about the instruction of important social skills and emotional awareness. One participant shared: "I used to use the *Chicken Soup* books an awful lot. And read a story particularly dealing with relationships and social skills. And we would use that then as a … starting point to really talk about the whole area of social skills and how you interact with people. And of course then students would contribute situations that they were in that [were] really difficult … and you would find that students – even though they were probably your rough and tough students – would contribute a whole lot to that and that they would get a whole lot from it and learn from each other." Almost all believed that the instruction of social skills is part of the role of both the schools and teachers – or should be. Most participants also reported similar perceptions for emotional awareness.

Overall, this multimethods descriptive study constructed an understanding of the perceptions and practices of NL-based teachers in the adoption of the role of a therapist within the role of a teacher, and found that participants had a primary academic instructional role but also adopted a therapeutic role. This research has particular significance in the development of an understanding of how the participants in this study perceived and practiced the application of therapeutic interventions, such as the potential impact on the understanding of the instructional role of the teacher, the place of social, emotional, and behavioural goals within the curriculum, and the occurrence and support of personal issues that arise in the school environment. As our classrooms and schools entwine diversity and inclusion, it is increasingly important to consider, comprehend, and appreciate how teachers support the personal needs of the students in our province.

Dr. Kimberly Mauch, formerly of St. Anthony Elementary and Point Leamington Academy, is currently an adjunct professor at Tyndale University College, an autism consultant with McMaster Children's Hospital, and as a special education teacher in Brantford, Ontario. She also teaches and writes for Brock University and Redeemer University College. She sorely misses her years in Newfoundland and continues to welcome opportunities to return. *She is especially grateful to her research participants who so freely shared their time and experiences.*

New Learning Tool Teaches Children to Navigate the Online World

by MATTHEW JOHNSON

In little more than a decade, the Internet has gone from being a curiosity to an inescapable fact of life – and parents and educators are struggling to catch up. Early concerns focused on the "digital divide," as schools and governments worked to assure Internet access for all students. As the Internet grew, however, the main issue became one of safety, as sensationalist media coverage prompted fears of students being contacted by "online predators".

Recent research has shown that these fears, while not entirely misplaced, do not accurately reflect the reality of children's online vulnerabilities. There are more prevalent issues that also need to be addressed: the arrival of Web 2.0 – online services that rely on user-contributed content, such as *YouTube* and *Facebook* – has underlined the need to teach young people to manage their privacy. At the same time, the Internet has become students' first – and often last – resource for research. Unfortunately, that research sometimes consists of little more than *Google* and *Wikipedia*, and hoax, commercial and hate sites are all too ready to take advantage of students' lack of scepticism and authentication skills. Finally, in the years since its inception the Web has become overwhelmingly commercial, spawning environments such as advergames which seamlessly blend advertising and entertainment, with young people showing little awareness of the nature of these sites.

Our research report *Young Canadians in a Wired World – Phase II* (the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study of its kind in Canada) convinced us that there was a need for a comprehensive Internet literacy resource that could be used in Elementary and Intermediate classrooms. The YCWW research showed us that young people are actively interested in learning more about their online environments. The kids we spoke to in our focus groups felt strongly that what they need from adults is more information about the kinds of content they find online, so they can make informed choices about what they choose to see, as well as training in how to protect their online privacy and how to tell good online information from bad. The interest is highest among the children in Grades 4 to 6. This is a particularly important time to learn these skills because kids in these grades are playing on commercial game sites that actively seek to collect their personal information, and, by Grade 6, they are exploring edgier Web sites.

To meet this need, Media Awareness Network (MNet), a leading Canadian media education organization, has created a comprehensive Internet literacy tutorial, *Passport to the Internet to the Internet*. Intended for classroom use in Grades 4-8, the *Passport to the Internet* program is designed to teach students key skills relating to online safety and privacy, research and authentication, online ethics and recognizing and decoding advertising. It does so by providing five modules that simulate popular environments used by young people, in which they are free to experiment and safely learn from their mistakes.

Young people told us that they are exposed to material all the time that they must choose to reject. They don't find this decision process difficult and they explain that it isn't as if they have to "sneak a peek" at a rare find of pornography or games of violence – rather, they must fend off material that they choose to avoid for their own reasons. The first module, *Web Café*, shows students how to judge a link, e-mail, banner ad or search result before clicking it, to determine in advance whether it will be useful and appropriate.

Almost all (94 per cent) of the top 50 sites students reported visiting in YCWW include marketing material. Over three-quarters of kids who play product-centred games (advergames) think they are "just games," not "mainly advertisements," and lack of awareness of the commercial nature of these games is highest amongst younger students – 82 per cent of kids in Grades 4-6 say these are just games not advertisements. *Co-Co's Choco Match*, a simulated advergame, teaches students to distinguish between legitimate information and advertising material on a commercial site while teaching them some of the "tricks of the trade" that online advertisers use to reach young consumers.

When students are asked what Internet-related subjects they would like to learn about in school,

the top choice for 68 per cent was "How to tell if information you find on the Net is true or not." The interest was highest amongst the younger students – 75 per cent of Grade 4-6 students want skills to authenticate online information. *Study Space* begins with a mock search engine which teaches students to use effective searching techniques by leading them to three fictional Web sites whose content users must judge as being reliable, unreliable or simple opinion.

In describing what they would like to learn about the Internet, young people told us that efforts should be made to develop opportunities, particularly for young children, to learn how to think about choices, and to gain decision-making skills. *Instant Pigeon* lets students engage in four Instant Messaging conversations, where they choose how to reply to their online "buddies" in order to learn how to deal with stranger contact, uploading photos and videos, and cyber bullying.

Another major concern reported by students was online privacy: two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) say they would like to learn "How to protect your privacy on the Net" in school. Again, the interest was highest among younger students: 74 per cent of Grade 4-6 students want skills to protect their privacy online. In *MyFace*, users are challenged to create an engaging social networking profile while maintaining their privacy.

Key to the *Passport to the Internet* approach is that each of the modules is interactive: students learn by performing the actual tasks they do online – using a search engine, carrying on a conversation, creating a profile. Instead of front-loading educational content before each module, *Passport to the Internet* lets users access what they need to know when they need to know it through the Help tool, which provides information about anything the student points to on the screen. Each module also ends with detailed feedback to help users improve their performance, and students are encouraged to re-visit each module as many times as they want to earn a perfect score. Throughout, *Passport to the Internet* takes a positive approach, reaching students through empowerment – teaching them to get the most from the Internet and take control of their online lives – rather than through scare tactics.

Designed for use in schools, *Passport to the Internet* provides teachers with a variety of tools for integrating it into their classrooms. It is provided in two versions, Junior (Grades 4 to 6) and Senior (Grades 7 to 8), each one customized to reflect students' developmental level. In *Study Space*, for instance, older children research the issue of whether fast food should be sold in schools, and must judge the reliability of three sites based on some fairly subtle clues; younger children, meanwhile, investigate the more fanciful question of whether or not cats dream and are given more obvious hints to judge each site's reliability.

The program provides teachers with tools to track each student's progress through the tutorial, and notifies them when a module has been completed and whether the student earned a Pass or Best result. Teachers are also provided with a thorough Teacher's Guide which gives detailed instructions for using the tutorial in class as well as background information on the major issues covered and suggestions for warm-up and extension activities tied to each module. Finally, curricular connections charts are provided to show teachers how *Passport to the Internet* fits into the curriculum for their province or territory.

MNet has been creating interactive Internet literacy tools since 1998, when it launched *Privacy Playground: The First Adventure of the Three Little Cyberpigs* (still available on the MNet Web site). With each project MNet has broadened its focus, adding resources that deal with topics such as online advertising to children, hate material and propaganda, and parenting in the Internet age. In addition to classroom Internet literacy resources, MNet also produces a group of professional development tools – the *Web Awareness Workshop Series* – which educates teachers about such topics as online safety, cyber bullying, privacy, marketing, research and authentication.

Passport to the Internet builds on these past efforts to create a resource that is more comprehensive, more interactive, and more technically sophisticated than anything MNet has done before. The program is available through a licensing arrangement as a stand-alone resource, or as part of the Web Awareness Workshop Series. For more information, or to preview Passport to the Internet, contact licensing@media-awareness.ca.

Passport to the Internet partners are: Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund, TELUS, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Toronto Catholic District School Board, London Public Library, and Nortel LearnIT.

Matthew Johnson is a Media Education Specialist with the Media Awareness Network.

How to Protect Your Privacy on Facebook

by ANN CAVOUKIAN

Introduction
by Stefanie Tuff

There are many articles that could be written about the cautions of online communication and information sharing for teachers – everything from cyberbullying to cases of teachers engaging in inappropriate online conduct. The NTLA Infosheet entitled "Cyberconduct and Electronic Communications – Important Information for Teachers" is a "must read" and is available on the NLTA website. The Canadian Teachers' Federation has taken a real leadership role in this area and helpful information and resources can be found on the CTF website.

It is the unprecedented and ever-increasing popularity of the social networking platform Facebook that gives rise to this article. It seems like "everyone" is on Facebook, which is quickly becoming a normal part of our everyday communications and the preferred method of keeping in touch with distant relatives and friends. However, as members of a profession expected to uphold certain "role model" standards in society, as well as the potential to become targets for online harassment or cyberbullying, teachers should be cautious about the personal information they share online.

Teachers should always maintain proper professional boundaries in all communications with students and parents, and it is strongly recommended that teachers not add students or their parents as Facebook "friends". Even if you are not sending messages to students/parents on Facebook, if these individuals are your "friends", they may be able to see and access exchanges, personal details, pictures, etc. that you have shared with other "friends" and would not normally ever choose to disclose to students or other people with whom you have a professional relationship. Facebook does include some fairly robust measures individuals can use to control their privacy settings but, in my experience, too few teachers are taking advantage of these options. What follows is a helpful and informative publication written by Ann Cavoukian, Ph.D., Information and Privacy Commissioner for Ontario, which can also be accessed on the Commission website (www.ipc.on.ca).

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

When you sign up as a user of Facebook, the default settings allow all other Facebook users to find you in searches. However, only those you have confirmed as friends or who share a network with you have access to your full profile. By default, your name and thumbnail profile picture can also be found on public search engines. Facebook has selected these settings based on what it believes most users want, but you can always change them to restrict access to your information, as you see fit. Therefore, you can change the default settings to restrict access to your profile. Under the current setting, only your friends, their friends and the people on your networks can see your profile. If you download Facebook Platform third-party applications into your profile, some of your information may be shared (see section on Applications below). It is important to explore these default settings, to adjust the privacy settings to those with which you are comfortable. This tip sheet has been revised to reflect the new formatting gradually introduced during the summer/fall of 2008. All users were switched over to the new interface during October 2008.

It's easy to change the default settings. Once you sign in, click on "Settings" at the top of the screen toward the right, (just to the left of the Search bar),and then choose "Privacy Settings" from the drop-down menu or visit http:\\Facebook.com\privacy. The Privacy Overview menu has four categories in which you can determine the degree of privacy you would like. You can click on each heading to access the page on which you can make your changes. Privacy settings can be customized to exclude or include specific friends or lists of friends. Remember to click on "Save Changes" before exiting the page. (**Note: Review your privacy settings if you change regional networks.** The settings will change back to the default: all members of that network will be able to see your full profile. It is important to be aware of this, and adjust your privacy settings if this is not what you want. It is a wise practice to check your privacy settings whenever you add anything or make any changes to your profile.)

Profile: This page contains two tabs, each with numerous individual controls for who can see aspects of your profile. On the Basic tab are controls for your entire profile, and individual features of your profile: Basic Information (which includes Gender, Birthday, Hometown, Political and Religious Views, and Relationship Status), Personal Information (which includes your Interests, Activities, Favorites and your About Me section), photos and videos tagged of you, status updates, friends, wall, education and work information. On the Contact Information tab, you can tailor permissions for IM Screen Name, Mobile Phone, Land Phone, Current Address, Website and Email Address (if in fact you provided these details for your profile).

• To limit viewing of Profile information to only your Facebook friends, select "Only Friends" in each drop-down menu. If you wish to limit viewing to certain segregated lists of friends that you can set up on your main Friends page, or just to individual friends, or to exclude certain individuals and networks, choose "Customize" in the drop-down menus and adjust the settings accordingly.

Search: You can control which Facebook users can find you in searches and what appears in your search listing within the site; you can prevent yourself from being suggested as a prospective friend to other Facebook users in the "People You May Know" feature; you can also control whether you are searchable by anyone on public search engines. Within Facebook, you can restrict which networks have access to your profile in searches and what actions people can take with your search results, such as contacting you or adding you as a friend.

• To be searchable within Facebook only by your Facebook friends, select "Only Friends" in the Search Visibility drop-down menu and leave the first set of checkboxes below the drop-down menu (the ones starting with "In addition...") blank.

• "Only Friends" also works to prevent your being presented as a prospective friend to other Facebook users. If you are available in Search to someone (for example, "Friends of Friends," "My Networks and Friends of Friends," or "Everyone,") you may appear in their "People You May Know" section. You will also not be presented as a potential friend to anyone you have 'x-ed out' of "People You May Know."

• To avoid being searchable on public search engines (Yahoo, Google, etc.), if you have selected "Everyone" in the Search Visibility drop-down menu, simply uncheck the box next to "Create a public search listing for me." Unchecking this box also makes basic information about you (your name, networks, profile picture and friend list) unavailable to Facebook Platform applications. *(cont'd on page 30)*

News Feed and Wall: This page has two tabs. On the "Actions Within Facebook" tab, you can control what activities result in stories showing up automatically on your Wall and your friends' News Feeds.

• "Uncheck" any actions that you do not want your friends to know about automatically, such as when you make a comment on a posted item or add a friend.

On the "Social Ads" tab, you can opt out of your information (and photos) being used for ads targeted at your friends by choosing "No One" in the drop-down menu.

Applications: You can place some controls on the information available to applications on your account, including those built using the Facebook Platform. Third-party applications, however, may have their own privacy policies and user controls that prevail over your Facebook settings. As stated in Facebook's Terms of Use, these applications are used at your own risk. You can learn more about applications by reading the "Overview" tab in this section.

• Under the "Settings" tab, you can set controls for any applications installed by your friends, and there is a general opt-out from any information being shared through the Facebook Platform. For maximum privacy protection, you can check off "Do not share any information about me through the Facebook API." Please note that this option will automatically switch off if you download any third-party applications or use your Facebook logon and password to sign up on an external website with Facebook Connect. In other words, downloading applications means that information about you may be shared in ways that you cannot control.

• This "Settings" page lists any applications you have blocked, and is where you go to unblock them. You can also keep track of friends whose application invitations you have ignored on this page.

• The Beacon Website's checkbox lets you opt out of having certain external websites post stories to your Wall and to your friends' News Feeds about your activities on those sites. Beacon is being phased out of Facebook.

• To view a summary and to change your own Application permissions, click on the "Applications" button in the bottom-left corner of any of your Facebook pages, then click on Edit in the pop-up window. In the chart displayed, each application has its own Edit option available. This brings up a selection of choices about permissions to publish stories on your Wall about your activities on the application or Facebook Connect external website. For maximum privacy, select "Never publish any stories…"

In addition, the Privacy Overview page offers the option of blocking specific people from viewing your profile.

Elsewhere on Facebook, you can control who can see Notes you have written and Photos you have posted, and manage the visibility of your online status.

• Within My Notes, click on either the My Notes or Notes About Me tab and click on the Edit Notes Privacy link under the Notes Settings heading on the right side of the page. The drop-down menu has the same options as those for Profile components explained above. You can also establish settings for who can comment on and subscribe to your notes.

• Within My Photos, click on Album Privacy to adjust drop-down menus for each album, in the same manner as the Profile components explained above.

• To adjust your online status setting, click inside the small Chat box that contains a silhouetted head and shoulders in the bottom right corner of your Profile page. A small pop-up menu will appear including a row with a statement of your online status. You can click to appear Offline (represented by a red dot) even if you are Online. If your status is shown as Online (green dot), your friends who investigate this feature can discover that you are online. This feature is intended to facilitate Chat. This expanded menu also includes settings for seeing photos with names, or names alone, of your online friends.

To report a fake or fraudulent profile on Facebook:

• From any Facebook page, click on the "Help" link in the bottom right-hand corner. Within the 'Help Center' tab, click on "Privacy." At the end of the list of Questions and Answers, click on "See all Questions and Answers from Facebook."

• On the next screen, find and click on "I need to report a fake profile or an imposter profile on Facebook." Fill in the form provided. You can also access this form directly at: http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=report_fake_profile

• If you wish to report the problem without logging in to Facebook, send an e-mail to login@facebook.com specifying that you are reporting a fake or fraudulent profile, with details such as the URL of the profile, the name and e-mail address being used and any networks the profile belongs to, along with your own contact information (so that Facebook can respond to your report).

• From the profile page itself: click on the 'Report this Person' link at the bottom of the page, and select 'Fake Profile' under Reason. You may also use this link to report other violations of Facebook's Terms of Use such as attacking individuals or groups, obscene content, nudity or pornography. The 'Report this Person' link does not appear on profile pages of your friends.

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Am I Homophobic?

by MAUREEN WRICE

As I contemplate what to write for this article I'm sitting in the glow of my Christmas tree lights. How fitting that I write on the topic of homosexuality and homophobia during the season of 'Peace on Earth, Good Will to Mankind'. May I suggest that you pour yourself a cup of coffee and keep the spirit of Christmas in your heart as you continue to read?

As education moves to a period that emphasizes inclusion and diversity, it is important to remember that 6-10% of students in our schools are homosexual. In fact, some statistics say that it's more like 15%. Changing these percentages to numbers means that one, two, or three of the children in a class of twenty are sexual minority youth.

In developing a homosexual identity an individual progresses through four stages of development. The Early Awareness stage begins around age ten when sexual minority youth begin to experience feelings of differences and same sex attraction. The second stage is Identity Confusion. Because of society's emphasis on heterosexuality, young adolescents begin to feel guilt and shame and keep their sexuality secret. Around age 16 students move into the third stage, Identity Assumption. During this stage some youth will disclose their sexual orientation to a limited number of people. At various ages, individuals reach the final stage of Identity Assumption. It is at this stage that they come to accept their sexuality and incorporate it into various social aspects of their life.

Without a doubt, adolescence is a challenging time in the human life cycle. This is true even more so for sexual minority youth. In a culture that highlights heterosexuality, students feel pressured to 'pass as normal' and fear 'discovery'. As a means of coping with these feelings students often try to pass as straight, use drugs/alcohol, and emotionally distance themselves from others. Violence and abuse is another challenge that homosexual youth face. One survey found that 80% of sexual minority youth had experienced verbal harassment and physical abuse. Compounding these challenges is the fact that only 11% of children receive positive support from their family when they do disclose their sexuality. Of the others, 26% have to leave home as a result of family conflict. In fact, it is estimated that 30-40% of homeless adolescents may be gay or lesbian. How do children respond to these challenges?

For many young people the pressures become too great. Responses to this pressure extend to drug/alcohol abuse, dropping out of school, prostitution, and/or suicide. According to the literature, 25% of sexual minority youth attempt suicide while 33% have given it some thought. Disturbing information isn't it? So the question is, how do teachers help? What can we do?

Perhaps we could begin by changing the culture of our schools. Do you realize that sexual minority youth hear a minimum of 25 anti-gay epithets a day? Research literature claims that 97% of the time teachers ignore these comments. In fact, 40% of students have heard teachers telling homophobic jokes. Such behavior contributes to students' increased feelings of isolation and stress. We have the power to change this. Let our actions not be reflective of these statistics.

We become teachers, and stay teachers, mainly because we care about children. We do not consciously ignore the needs of any of our students. However, in many incidences, sexual minority youth are the invisible students in our class. They are silently crying out. They need our help. May I be so bold as to suggest personal reflection as a means of helping sexual minority youth? Many of us have grown up in a traditional environment. Possibly, we need to determine what our own biases are and reflect on our actions or lack of action. We need to ask: "Am I homophobic?" Following are a number of statements (derived from www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/assault/etc/quiz.html) to help you reflect on this question. Begin with answering on the spectrum of strongly agree/strongly disagree then ask yourself why/ why not:

1. Gay people make me nervous.
2. If I discovered a friend was gay/lesbian I would end the friendship.
3. I make derogatory remarks or jokes about gay people.
4. I feel I cannot trust a person that is homosexual.
5. When I meet someone I try to find out if they are homosexual.
6. Being homosexual is a waste of a life.

As you near the end of this article, I hope you enjoyed your coffee. More importantly, I hope, in this short amount of space, that I have made you more cognizant of the presence, challenges, and needs of the sexual minority youth in our schools. As we move into a new year, it is my wish that each of us do more to help empower all of the children that we are privileged to meet.

Maureen Wrice is a teacher at Donald C. Jamieson Academy in Burin Bay Arm and a member of the Provincial Equity Issues in Education Committee.

Calendar

SENIOR HIGH SPECIAL INTEREST COUNCIL WORKSHOP
April 3, 2009
Gander Hotel and Conference Centre. The NLTA Senior High Special Interest Council presents a one-day professional development workshop. Boy Smarts – Making Sense of Gender & Learning for High School Males, featuring Barry McDonald. Cost: $100 (Feb. 1 - March 13). Late Registration: $125. Group rates apply for schools registering more than 10. For information and registration contact Craig Wells, cwells@evh.k12.nf.ca, Tel: 709-489-4374 (ext. 26) or George Tucker, gtucker@nlta.nl.ca, Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 (ext. 245).

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH CONFERENCE
April 22-24, 2009
Saskatoon, SK. Where It's AT: Teams Using Learning Technology. Speakers: Kelly S. Fonner, MS, Educational and Assistive Technology Consultant and Scott Marfilius, MA, Educational and Assistive Technology Consultant. Topics: *Integration of Assistive Technology into the Classroom* and *Literacy for All – Supports Through Assistive Technology*; plus break-out sessions and computer lab on Day 3. For information contact: eofd@sasktel.net; Tel: 306-651-3118; Fax: 306-651-3119.

CAPSLE CONFERENCE
April 26-28, 2009
Toronto, ON. Canadian Association for the Pratical Study of Law in Education (CAPSLE) Conference. Theme: *Law in Education: Tower or Bridge*. This conference aims to bring together educational stakeholders to explore ways in which we can all become better educational leaders, both within the existing legal structures and through further changes to the legal landscape. For further information or to register visit www.capsle.ca.

PROVINCIAL SAC CONFERENCE
May 20-22, 2009
Terra Nova Golf Resort. Theme: *Leadership That Matters*. For more information check out the website at www.sac2009.ca. Please note: delegates who register before February 13, 2009 will be eligible to win a "STAY and PLAY" golf package from Terra Nova Golf Resort. Registration on the website will not be considered complete until fees have been paid.

LANGUAGES WITHOUT BORDERS: NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATORS 2009
May 21-23, 2009
Edmonton, AB. *Exploring New Frontiers in Language and Culture Education*. The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools invite you to the National Conference for Second Language Educators. Participate in an exciting opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Canada and around the world. For information or to register: www.caslt.org.

2009 ASSESSMENT SUMMIT
August 20-21, 2009
Halifax, NS. Hear five of the most distinguished assessment experts in North America illustrate why the fundamental purpose of assessment is not to rate, rank and sort students, but rather to provide meaningful feedback that leads to improved student learning. Early bird price: $499 + HST (before March 31, 2009); regular price: $549.99 + HST (after March 31, 2009). Special group pricing for registration fees paid by boards, schools etc. Registration deadline: May 1, 2009. Register online at www.nselc.ednet.ns.ca or call 902-422-3270.

THE MOTIVATION BREAKTHROUGH: 6 SECRETS TO TURNING ON THE TUNED-OUT CHILD WORKSHOP
October 5, 2009
Delta Hotel, St. John's. Featuring Mr. Richard Lavoie, renown author, speaker, learning disability expert and producer of the popular, F.A.T. City workshop video. This workshop is sponsored by the Council of Special Services. For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481.

2009 Convention Deadlines

February 15, 2009
- All nominations for Provincial Executive for publication in Convention issue of *The Bulletin* must be postmarked or hand delivered to NLTA Office.
- Names of elected delegates and alternates to Convention should be forwarded to NLTA Office for printing in Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.
- Resolutions to Convention must be received at the NLTA Office.

February 17, 2009
Run-off ballot for the election of President and Vice-President (if required).

March 15, 2009
Mailing of Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.

April 14-17, 2009
Biennial General Meeting

April 16, 2009
Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Provincial Executive.

Dates to Remember

March 2009

March 1-7	Education Week
Mar 19	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
Mar 31	**Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year
Mar 31	**Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
Mar 31	**Deadline** (on or before March 31): International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2009

Apr 1	**Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
Apr 15	**Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract